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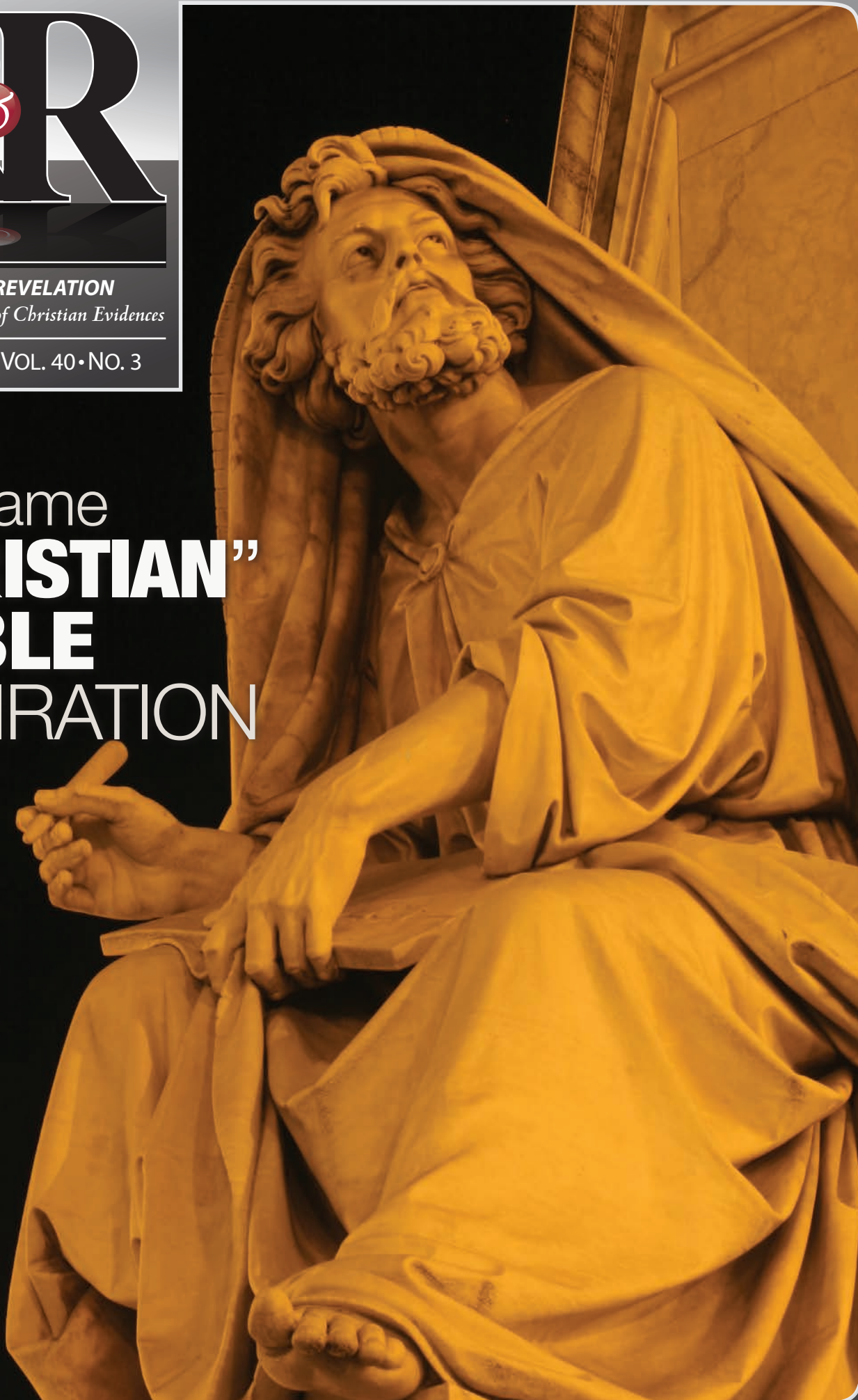
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The Name “**CHRISTIAN**” & **BIBLE** INSPIRATION Part 2

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The Name "Christian" & Bible Inspiration

(Part II)

Dave Miller, Ph.D.



The prophet Isaiah statue in the Piazza di Spagna in Rome, Italy

Article In Brief...



The element of prophecy is one proof of the inspiration of the Bible. The prediction of a “new name” over 700 years before that name was bestowed is remarkable in itself. But the fact that the prophecy anticipated Christianity in general, and the name “Christian” in particular, is supernatural in its import. The minute details of the prophecy coupled with the outworking of salvation history lead the Bible reader to one inescapable conclusion.

[**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Part I of this two-part series appeared in the February issue. Part II follows below and continues, without introductory comments, where the first article ended.]

Romans 7:3?

BUT what about Romans 7:3? What is the meaning of *chrematidzo* in this verse? “So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called¹ an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.” What did Paul/the Holy Spirit intend to convey by noting that the woman “**will be called** an adulteress”? Called by whom? An examination of the context of Romans 7 reveals that Paul is discussing the unprecedented relationship that the Christian has with Christ. Those who were reluctant to

jettison the Law of Moses failed to realize they could not have both—Moses and Christ. In fact, a death of sorts had occurred with regard to the Mosaic system though God had instigated it some 1,500 years earlier. He no longer interacted with human beings through that legal framework since it was “obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13), “passing away” (2 Corinthians 3:11), and “nailed to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). He now interacts with “all”² human beings via the Gospel (Romans 1:16). Paul uses an illustration associated with God’s law that presses his point. God’s marriage law binds a woman to her husband until his death—stated by God Himself the day He enacted the institution of marriage for the very first two human beings: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they

shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Jesus added: “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6). This stricture is **God’s** law—not man’s. It originated with **Him**—not man. Any man who puts away his wife and remarries while that wife is still living is counted **by God** as an adulterer.³ Any woman who puts away her husband and remarries while that husband is still living is counted **by God** as an adulteress. The fact is that mere human beings through human history, from country to country and culture to culture, have concocted their own definitions of “adultery” and sexual sin. However, it matters not what human laws legislate, or how human courts rule, or what anyone on Earth thinks. Public opinion is irrelevant when it comes to God’s laws. How a person’s marital status is publicly reckoned by society is of no ultimate meaning or consequence. Rather, **God** is the One who defines and reckons what constitutes a violation of His marriage laws. Consider this clarification of Paul’s illustration:

So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called [**by God**] an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that [i.e., **God’s**] law, so that she is no adulteress [**by God’s reckoning**], though she has married another man.

It is true that as humans adopt their own social mores—whether invented by themselves or received from God—a given culture or society will publicly reckon a woman guilty of adultery as they define the concept. But their reckoning on the matter is not what decides whether a woman is actually an adulteress—even as human opinion does not decide which Law of God is in effect this side of the cross. Observe that Paul’s words “so that she is no

adulteress” are parallel to “she will be called an adulteress.” The latter does not refer to public opinion on the matter, but rather constitutes a forthright declaration of objective spiritual reality—which can only come from God. This evaluation of this passage is verified by the conclusion that Paul draws from his illustration: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead” (Romans 7:4). He did **not** mean to convey that the wider public would so reckon them in their relationship with the Law. It is God who dispenses the right for those who were under the Law of Moses to set it aside and place themselves under submission to the Law of Christ. Only God can legislate what laws apply to whom at any given time in earthly history. Consequently, John Jones rightly observes that the woman in question “will be deemed or called an adulteress, **on the authority of the divine law.**”⁴

Based on this analysis of the context of Romans 7, the occurrence of the term *chrematidzo* in verse 3 is a reference to **God’s own declaration** regarding the circumstances under which a woman is an adulteress. It does **not** refer to public opinion or what society may decide to call, count, or reckon a woman with regard to her marital status. If such be the case, it follows that out of the nine occurrences of the term *chrematidzo* in the New Testament, eight are unequivocally allusions to **divine** callings. If eight of the nine New Testament occurrences are without doubt references to **divine** callings or actions, on what basis could one legitimately (i.e., grammatically and linguistically) reject this same usage in the only other occurrence if, in fact, the same

meaning makes perfect sense and fits the context? Nothing in the context of Acts 11:26 necessitates a meaning that deviates from the standard meaning. Furthermore, extra-biblical occurrences of the term do not trump Bible usage.⁵

The Same Meaning in Acts 11:26

As a matter of fact, despite the general uniformity among Greek authorities in isolating Acts 11:26 and Romans 7:3 from the other occurrences of the word by assigning a different shade of meaning to them, a number of language scholars do not concur with the inconsistency. They, in fact, assign the same meaning to these two verses as they do to the other seven. For example, in his widely acclaimed and longstanding commentary on Acts, Adam Clarke insists: “The word *χρηματίζω* in our common text, which we translate *were called*, signifies in the New Testament, to *appoint*, *warn*, or *nominate*, by *Divine direction*.”⁶ Matthew Poole, 17th-century English theologian and biblical commentator, affirmed that the name “Christian” was given “by Divine author-

ity, for the word imports no less. And that it was not a name they gave themselves, much less was it a name the enemies of Christianity gave unto the professors of it.... But God would have Christ’s disciples to be called Christians.”⁷ George Benson, 18th-century British theologian, commentator, and Greek scholar, explained the meaning of the word in Acts 11:26: “*χρηματίζω* signifieth, *to be warned by a divine admonition*” and, regarding its occurrence in Romans 7:3, he states: “perhaps, there it ought to be understood in **the same sense.**”⁸ Philip Doddridge, 18th-century English Congregationalist minister, educator, and hymnwriter, translated the sentence in Acts 11:26—“*And the disciples were by Divine appointment first named Christians, at Antioch,*” and explained that “the use of the word *χρηματίζω* implies, that it was done by a divine direction.”⁹ 18th-century English independent minister, John Guyse, of whom John Wesley stated in the Preface to his *Notes on the New Testament* that he was indebted to Dr. Guyse

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Editor:

Dave Miller, M.A., M.Div., M.A.R., Ph.D.*
(*Communication, Southern Illinois University)

Associate Editor:

Jeff Miller, M.S., Ph.D.*
(*Biomechanical Engineering, Auburn University)

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for many “useful observations,” observed regarding Acts 11:26: “It is well known that (χρηματισσαι) the word here used, commonly, **if not always**, in the *New Testament* signifies to be *divinely warned*, or *warned of God*: And this is the sense in which our sacred historian used it, *chap. x.22* and *Luke ii.26*.”¹⁰ Observe that Guyse calls attention to the fact that the same inspired writer—Luke—had already used the same word on two previous occasions to refer to **divine** interpositions, making Luke’s usage uniform and consistent. Wayne Jackson well summarizes the matter: “The term ‘called’ is used exclusively in the New Testament of a divine calling.”¹¹

Not Given by Mere Men

Having dismissed the possibility that God is the Source of the name “Christian,” many commentators postulate that the name was given by the enemies and critics of the church, likely given in derision,¹² and probably by the Romans.¹³ Others claim that the name simply arose from among the Christians themselves.¹⁴ Of course, if we have understood the Isaiah prophecy correctly, the first of these postulations is incorrect. The second is correct—if understood in the sense that God bestowed the name from within the believing community via Divine instruction.¹⁵

Notice that, since we are informed in no uncertain terms that the new name came “from the mouth of the Lord,” we must consider in what way or through what means the Lord achieved this action. We certainly have instances in Bible history where God spoke audibly and directly to individuals.¹⁶ He also communicated His will via dreams, visions, and angelic visitations.¹⁷ However, Luke provides us with clues to help us make

sense of the means by which the Lord bestowed the new name. In his *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* based on the Nestle Greek text, Alfred Marshall rendered the relevant sentence in Acts 11:26, referring to Paul and Barnabas—“And it happened to them also year a whole **to be assembled** in the church and **to teach** a crowd considerable, and **to call** firstly in Antioch the disciples Christians.”¹⁸ Although a literal, albeit awkward, rendering, do not miss the fact that “to be assembled,” “to teach,” and “to call” are all three infinitives¹⁹ that hark back to Paul and Barnabas. It was Paul and Barnabas who did the teaching, assembling, **and calling** (i.e., divine calling/prophesying).

Meyer explained the same grammatical nuance in which the three successive infinitives are tied to the verb and pronoun (ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς)—“it happened to them.” He concluded: “But it is logically correct that χρηματισσαι should still be dependent on ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς, just because the reported appellation...was causally connected with the lengthened and successful labours of the two men in that city.”²⁰ In other words, the “calling” is tied to the verb (“it happened”) and pronoun (“them”)—again, indicating Paul and Barnabas as the instrumentality of the calling. A.T. Robertson adds his confirmation: “This first active infinitive *chrematisai* is also a subject of *egeneto* and is added as a separate item by the use of *te* [another word for “and”—DM] rather than *kai* [“and”—DM].”²¹ Lenski agrees: “By being added with τε, the third infinitive is connected with both infinitives that precede and thus states that it was during this year that the disciples bore...the name ‘Christians.’”²² Again, these Greek sources agree that the third infinitive

(“to call”) is linked to the previous two infinitives, and all three modify the verb “it happened.”

Noting the underlying Greek, Benson states: “Whereby is signified, that *Barnabas* and *Saul* first gave them the name of *Christians*.”²³ Guyse says the mouth of the Lord gave the name “by immediate suggestion to Saul and Barnabas”²⁴—which accords fully with the New Testament depiction of the nature of inspiration. Jackson agrees: “[I]f the disciples ‘were [divinely] called’ Christians, the name must have been conveyed in some fashion, and the use of Barnabas and Saul might well have been the means.”²⁵ Adam Clarke agrees: “If, therefore, the name was given by Divine appointment, it is most likely that Saul and Barnabas were directed to give it.”²⁶ In fact, the grammar of the passage makes it **certain**—not merely “most likely.” The same persons who “assembled” and “taught” are the same persons who “called.”²⁷ No doubt God achieved His will in bestowing the “name” in the same manner in which He guided Paul and all inspired spokesmen in their divine communications.²⁸ McGarvey summarizes the origin of the name “Christian” in Acts 11:26: “The fact that Luke here adopts it, and that both Paul and Peter afterward recognized it, gives it all the validity of inspired usage, and, therefore, all the weight of divine authority.”²⁹

Other Occurrences

It’s no wonder, then, that when on trial before King Agrippa, with Roman procurator Porcius Festus in attendance, Paul pressed the King with a personal appeal to recall his own belief in the Old Testament prophets. “Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian’” (Acts 26:28).³⁰ It is likewise not surpris-

ing that Peter, in the midst of an epistle that focuses on the overwhelming persecution and suffering³¹ being perpetrated on believers, he admonished them: “For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters: but if a man suffer **as a Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God **in this name**” (1 Peter 4:15-16, ASV). Peter understood that the “name” (*onomati*) under which followers of Christ were to live and bear their hardships is the name “Christian” (see also vs. 14; 2 Timothy 2:19; James 2:7).

ISAIAH 62:2 = ACTS 11:26

IN view of these facts, there are those authorities, though admittedly in the minority, who see the connection between Isaiah’s prophecy of a “new name” and the bestowal of the name “Christian” in Acts 11:26. For example, in his widely acclaimed commentary series, Matthew Henry alludes to Isaiah 62:2 as being fulfilled in Acts 11:26.³² Likewise, Guyse offered these remarks on Acts 11:26: “So God put a peculiar honour upon this church of converted proselytes, calling them by another, and a *new name*, which it was prophesied the mouth of the Lord should name (Isa. lxii.2. and lxi.15).”³³ Referring to the church at Antioch, Guyse also noted:

So these believers at *Antioch* were the first, who in a still higher sense, not without warrant from divine intimations, publicly and solemnly took upon themselves the name of *Christians*...thereby professing, and glorying in their relation to *Christ*, as the only anointed Saviour.³⁴

James Coffman likewise made the connection between Isaiah 62 and Acts 11:26, and also tied Isaiah 56:5 to the same occurrence.³⁵ He asserted: “This is the

only name specifically commanded by an apostle as the one in which the Lord’s people should ‘glorify God.’”³⁶

SUMMARY

DESPITE the fact that other names are mentioned in the Isaiah context, causing hesitancy by some to connect the prophecy with the singular name of “Christian,” nevertheless, “Christian” holds transcendent status on the basis of the fact that Isaiah pinpoints **very specific future events** that would precede and culminate in the bestowal of the new name. His prophecy specifically anticipates (1) the establishment of the church in Jerusalem in Acts 2, consisting only of Jews, (2) followed by the incorporation of the Gentiles in Acts 10, (3) in turn giving way to the inspired declaration by Luke in Acts 11 that for the **first** time in human history, the disciples were designated “Christians.” These Earthshaking events are too significant and integral to the divine scheme of redemption to be coincidental or circumstantial.

Pause for a moment, “take a step back,” and contemplate how God

brought to fruition His plan of salvation. “When the fullness of the time had come” (Galatians 4:4), we see the arrival of Christ in human form on Earth (only after some 4,000 years of human history in which God actively operated providentially “behind the scenes” in anticipation of what was to come), His life culminating in a propitiatory death (around which the sole means of atonement revolves), His resurrection and ascension and, finally, the establishment of His Church and the commencement of the proclamation of the Gospel. This remarkable establishment—second only to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in spiritual importance—specifically and intentionally was composed initially only of Jews, even though it was God’s intention from eternity to save **all** people regardless of ethnicity or nationality. Hence, though the initially exclusive outreach to Jews was deemed divinely appropriate (cf. Acts 13:46-47), it was not until the Gospel was offered to the Gentiles that we see the climax and pinnacle of God’s redemptive intentions. It makes complete sense, then, that God

(cont. on p. 32)

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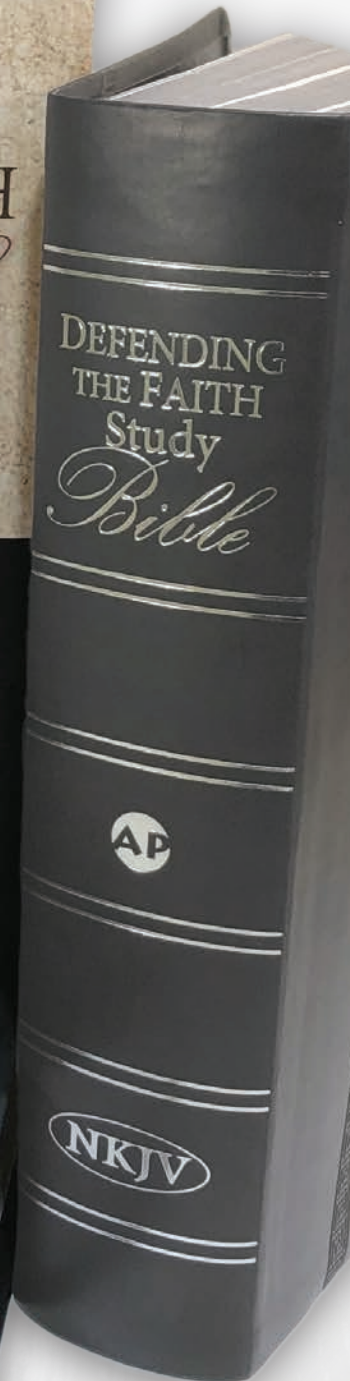
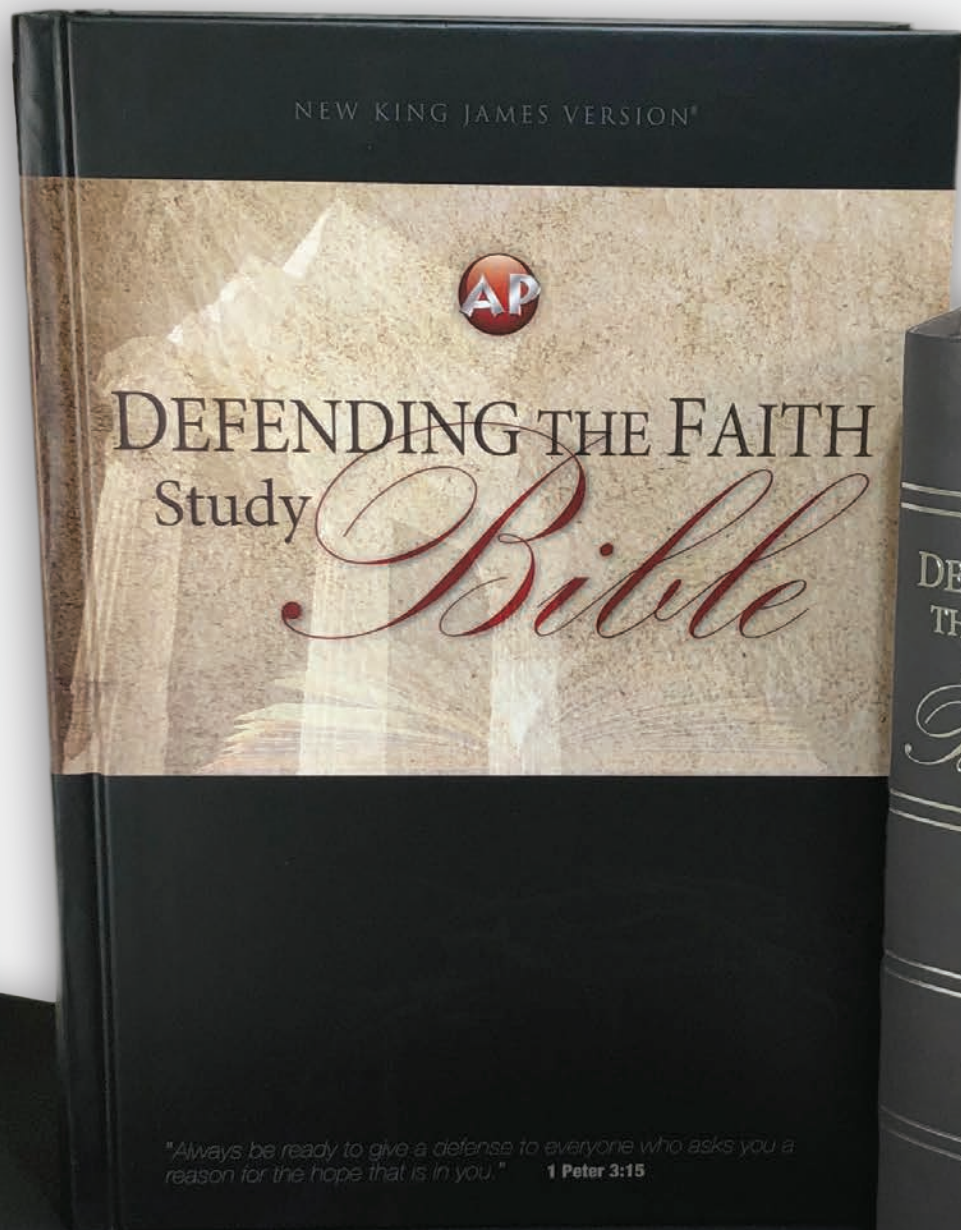
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would mark this defining eventuality—this eternally significant spiritual accomplishment in which the first Gentile converts were made and the first Gentile church was established—with a Heavenly notation and stamp of approval of this divinely wondrous occurrence. He did so by bestowing the name that He intended from all eternity to identify those who would render submission to His Son.³⁷

“By what more glorious, or more honorable name, could they have been called? A name, which, in its genuine and original meaning, includeth in it everything that is virtuous and amiable, just and charitable, noble and divine!”³⁸ Indeed, all those who profess to be Christians would do well to abandon humanly-devised denominational names and conform themselves to the name intended by Deity from all eternity to characterize those who belong to Him.

CONCLUSION

With uncanny precision—characteristic only of divine foresight and eternal pre-planning—the arrival of the name Christian in human history is further demonstration of the inspiration of the Bible. Such earth-shaking events are too marvelous for the finite human mind to fully fathom. Only an eternal Being could orchestrate such magnificent spiritual realities.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—

things which angels desire to look into (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How **unsearchable** are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?” “Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?” For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:33-36).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Greek sources identify the use of *chrematisei* in this verse as an example of a “Gnomic future.” See G. Abbott-Smith (1922), *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons), p. 484, and Ernest De Witt Burton (1898), *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), third edition, p. 36.
- ² The term “all” is used several times in Romans as a technical word for all categories of human flesh, i.e., Jew and Gentile. Cf. “every” (2:9; 3:19) and “none” (3:10-12).
- ³ Jesus gives but one exception to this general rule, found in Matthew 19:9.
- ⁴ John Jones (1825), *The Tyro’s Greek and English Lexicon* (London: Longman, et al.), second edition, p. 1332, emp. added. This observation is supported by the fact that the Gnomic future here has the force of an imperative, i.e., “let her be called.” The imperative makes it a command. Whose command? Paul would not be speaking of humans commanding other humans. Rather, he was simply relaying a command of God—that such a woman is to be considered to be in a state of adultery. See Nigel Turner (1963), *Syntax in A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ed. James Moulton (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), 3:86. Also Barbara and Timothy Friberg (1981), *Analytical Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 485.
- ⁵ The name “Christian” appears in several early secular writers, including Pliny the Younger (*Letters*, 10.96), Suetonius (*Life of Nero*, XVI.2; *Life of Claudius*, XVIII.2), Tacitus (*Annals*, XV.44), as well as Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities*, XVIII.3.3). Even the use of the term by those outside the Christian community supports the conclusion that Acts 11:26 refers to an action taken by God. Hermann Olshausen notes that among “profane” writers, “it is used especially where mention is made of giving names or titles of office, according to the radical meaning of the word, ‘to manage affairs of state’”—(1860), *Biblical Commentary on the Gospels and on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), 4:379. Accordingly, observe that this usage squares with the idea that God Himself gave the name to manage the affairs of the new kingdom. Secular writers merely used the word as an identifier of the group to which they were referring, without necessarily intending any sort of derogatory overtones.
- ⁶ Adam Clarke (1855), *Matthew to the Acts* (New York: Carlton & Phillips), 1:772, italics in orig.
- ⁷ Matthew Poole (no date), *A Commentary on the Holy Bible: Matthew-Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 3:422.
- ⁸ George Benson (1756), *The History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion* (London: J. Waugh and W. Fenner), 1:248, italics in orig., emp. added.
- ⁹ Philip Doddridge (1807), *The Family Expositor* (Charlestown, MA: S. Etheridge), p. 164, italics in orig.
- ¹⁰ John Guyse (1797), *The Practical Expositor* (Edinburgh: Ross & Sons), 3:136, parentheses and italics in orig., emp. added. Guyse received the degree of D.D. from Aberdeen in 1733.
- ¹¹ Wayne Jackson (2005), *The Acts of the Apostles from Jerusalem to Rome* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications), p. 138.
- ¹² For example, in the prestigious *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* series,

Richard Longenecker alludes to “its having first been given in derision”—(1981), *Acts in The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 9:402. Yet A.C. Hervey insists: “There is no evidence...of its having been given in derision”—(1958 reprint), *The Acts of the Apostles in The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph Exell (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 18:359. Also John M'Clintock and James Strong: “There is no reason to think with some that the name ‘Christians’ was given in absolute *derision*”—(1968 reprint), “Christian,” in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 2:269, italics in orig. Likewise Jackson: “The name... was not given in derision by the enemies of Christ” (p. 138). Also S.T. Bloomfield (1845), *The Greek Testament* (London: Longman, et al.), 1:596—“There is no reason to think...that the name Χριστιανοὶ was given in *derision*.... [T]here is no proof that it was a term of reproach.” In fact, according to G.V. Lechler and K. Gerok, this view “has nothing to recommend it, except the circumstance that the people of Antioch were notorious for their wit and satire”—(1864), *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. J.P. Lange (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), 1:436.

¹³ Olshausen maintained: “This name proceeded from the Gentiles, and, as the form of it shews, from the Romans” (4:379). Heinrich Meyer states emphatically: “This name decidedly originated not in, but *outside of, the church*.... Hence the origin of the name must be derived *from the Gentiles*”—(1879), *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 296, italics in orig. Also G.V. Lechler and K. Gerok: “the name proceeded from the Gentiles” (1:435). Likewise A.C. Hervey: “they received the name of Christians...from the outside world, and accepted it themselves” (18:359). F.F. Bruce claims the name is “a Latin formation (with suffix -iανός from Latin -ianus)—(1988), *The Book of*

Acts in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 228. However, Christopher Wordsworth insisted that “the termination -onus is *no* proof of a *Roman* extraction”—(1872), *The New Testament...in the Original Greek* (London: Rivingtons), 1:96, italics in orig. Though he concedes the Latin termination of the word, R.J. Knowling says, “it is difficult to find an origin for the title amongst Christians or amongst Jews.... [B]ut there is no need to suppose that the name was of Roman origin”—(no date), *The Acts of the Apostles in The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2:268-269. M'Clintock and Strong agree with this observation, noting that the Latin termination “is not indeed a conclusive proof that it emanated from the Romans, because such terminations had already been familiarized throughout the East by the Roman dominion” (2:269). Similarly, H.B. Hackett stated: “**The argument is not decisive**, since Latinisms were not unknown to the Greek of this period”—(1870), *A Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles* (Boston, MA: Gould & Lincoln), p. 193, emp. added. Noting the older critical scholars’ objections to the historicity of the statement in Acts 11:26, based on the infrequent use of the term “Christian” as well as the Latin termination -ianos, John Dickie states emphatically: “But there is general agreement now that these objections are **groundless**”—(1979), “Christian” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1:657, emp. added.

¹⁴ Elias Bickerman held that *chrematidzo* means “assume the name” or “style oneself” and so means that the Christians themselves originated the name—(1949), “The Name of Christians,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, 42[2]:109-124, April. Matthew Henry agreed: “Probably they called themselves so, incorporated themselves by that title.... they gave themselves a name”—(1838),

The Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible, ed. William Jenks (Brattleboro: Brattleboro Typographic Company), p. 62. Wordsworth cites his agreement with Eusebius who “appears to ascribe its imposition to the Church herself, and not...to her enemies” (1:96). But Dickie disagrees: “The name...did not originate with the Christians themselves” (1:657). As noted previously, so does Poole: “...not a name they gave themselves” (p. 422). And R.C.H. Lenski is emphatic: “It is at once evident that the disciples did not invent this name themselves”—(2001), *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostle* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), p. 457. Observe, however, that this view does not necessarily exclude the source of the name being God—since outsiders would have naturally attributed its origin to the Christians themselves out of ignorance as to the role the Lord would have exercised by divine inspiration in bestowing the name via His spokesmen. Poole illustrates this very point by attributing the source of the name to “Divine authority” while stating “it was not a name they gave themselves” (p. 422).

¹⁵ John Calvin understood this fact in his comments on Acts 11:26: “Christ brought forth his name thence like a standard, whereby it might be made known to all the world that there was some people whose captain was Christ, and which did glory in his name”—(1999 reprint), *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 1:471. (1:472).

¹⁶ For example, Moses (Exodus 33:11) and Job (Job 38:1).

¹⁷ For example, Abraham (Genesis 15:1), Joseph (Genesis 37:6), Pharaoh (Genesis 41:25), Balaam (Numbers 22:22ff.), Peter (Acts 10:3), and Ananias (Acts 9:10).

¹⁸ Alfred Marshall (1958), *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 517.

¹⁹ All three are first Aorist infinitives—Samuel Bagster (no date), *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons), pp. 97,386,438. *Chrematizai* is in

the active voice which indicates that “they called” rather than “they were called,” as would be the case if the word was in the passive voice. “To teach” is also active, while the third infinitive (“to be assembled”) is passive. Nevertheless, all three modify the leading verbal phrase, “It happened to them,” i.e., to Paul and Barnabas. Hence, what happened to Paul and Barnabas was that “they were assembled,” “they taught,” and “they called,” i.e., they called the disciples Christians first at Antioch. See also Knowling, 2:268. Some lexicographers limit the occurrence of the verb *chrematidzo* in the New Testament to the passive, e.g., Thomas Green (1890), *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* (New York: John Wiley & Sons), p. 205. However, as Hugo McCord rightly observes, its appearance in Hebrews 12:25 discounts that notion since the present participle in that verse is in the active voice—(1963), “The Divine Name,” *Gospel Advocate*, 105[50]:790, December 12. p. 790; recall Marcus Dods’ rendering: “Him that made to them divine communications on earth”—(no date), *The Epistle to the Hebrews in The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 4:373. Ultimately, even if *chrematisai* were passive, it would not alter the fact that the disciples were first designated “Christians” by someone, and evidence is lacking for attributing that action to outsiders. If Isaiah 62:2 refers to this occurrence, the matter is settled as to Who was responsible for imparting the name. On the passive, compare Alexander Buttman (1873), *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek* (Andover: Warren F. Draper), p. 188, and Hervey: “Its common meaning is, in the passive voice, ‘to be warned by God’” (18:359). To the contrary, see the discussion in Gareth Reese (1976), *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book*

of Acts (Joplin, MO: College Press), pp. 420–423.

²⁰ p. 295.

²¹ A.T. Robertson (1930), *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman), 3:160, brackets added.

²² p. 457.

²³ 1:248, italics in orig.

²⁴ 3:136.

²⁵ p. 138, brackets in orig.

²⁶ 1:772.

²⁷ In an interchange with Alexander Campbell printed in *The Millennial Harbinger* beginning in September 1857 on the origin of the name “Christian,” James Shannon articulated succinctly the misrepresentation by the KJV in its rendering of Acts 11:26—“[I]t breaks a single sentence into two; converts the active voice into the passive; the infinitive mood into the indicative; and the accusative case into the nominative”—(1858), “The Christian Name—No. 2” in *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1[8]:454.

²⁸ See 1 Peter 1:10–12; 2 Peter 1:16–21; 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 10:19; 2 Samuel 23:2. For a discussion of the meaning of “inspiration” and how the Bible defines that phenomenon, see Dave Miller (2014), “The Nature of Bible Inspiration,” Apologetics Press, <http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=5012>.

²⁹ J.W. McGarvey (1863), *A Commentary on Acts of Apostles* (Bowling Green, KY: Guardian of Truth Foundation), p. 147.

³⁰ The Greek text is somewhat difficult to clarify, causing some translators to take Agrippa’s statement as a forthright indication that he was partially convinced by Paul’s defense, while other translators take Agrippa’s reaction ironically, if not sarcastically, and cast the statement as a question. For discussion of the textual question, see Bruce Metzger (1975), *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies), p. 496; Jack Lewis (1991), *The Eng-*

lish Bible From KJV to NIV (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), second edition, pp. 184,391; F.F. Bruce (1990), *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 506, who renders it: “In short, you are urging me to act the Christian.” Regardless of how one understands Agrippa’s statement—whether sincerely or ironically—it nevertheless bears out the fact that he understood Paul’s objective: **to encourage people to become Christians.**

³¹ Forms of the word “suffer” occur 17 times in 1 Peter in the NKJV.

³² Matthew Henry (1810), *An Exposition of all the Books of the Old and New Testaments* (London: W. Gracie), 4:823.

³³ 3:136, italics and parentheses in orig.

³⁴ 3:136–137, italics in orig.

³⁵ James Burton Coffman (1976), *Commentary on Acts* (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing House), pp. 234ff.

³⁶ p. 235.

³⁷ According to Walter Grundmann, the name “Christian” “denotes Christ’s adherents, those who belong to Him”—(1974), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 9:537. Also Dickie, 1:657—“an adherent of Christ.” Hence, as Hans Bietenhard observes, they are “the possession of their Lord”—(1981 reprint), “ὄνομα” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 5:279. Or as K.L. Schmidt notes, they are “partisans of Christ”—(1965), “ἐκκλησία” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 3:516. Richard Longenecker says the word means “‘Christ’s followers,’ or ‘those of the household of Christ’” (9:402).

³⁸ Benson, 1:249.

America's Famine

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Unlike many nations in human history, America has never really known want. Even the Great Depression of the 1930s does not begin to compare with the famines of antiquity that devastated entire civilizations and resulted in the starvation of millions of people. With such extreme prosperity dominating the United States, the average American cannot even begin to fathom the kind of hunger that has characterized large segments of humanity throughout history. Who can even conceptualize eating one's own children? Yet such has not been uncommon in world history (cf. 2 Kings 6:28-29). In an article that appeared in *National Geographic* magazine in 1917, Ralph Graves surveyed historical occurrences of famine all the way back to the Egyptian pharaohs. The portrait is horrifying. For example, Graves observed:

Probably in no other country in the world has a people been brought to such a low ebb of morality or become so completely lost to all semblance of rational humanity as in the series of famines which swept over Egypt during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, under Mohammedan rule.¹

Cats, dogs, and horses were extremely expensive, women abandoned their jewels as worthless, and desperate people resorted to cannibalism—even selling human flesh in the market place. Babies were kidnapped for food, if not eaten by their own parents. Even the graves were ransacked for food.² Savagery and moral degradation were the order of the day.

A famine in 1069 in England was so severe that peasants, no longer able to find dogs and horses to eat, sold themselves into slavery in hopes of being fed by the master.³ In 1314, a famine in England brought such misery and suffering that bodies lined the roadsides, everything imaginable was eaten (including dogs, cats, horses, and

babies), and when new felons were cast into prison, starving inmates would tear them to pieces for food.⁴ France was plagued with devastating famines from the Middle Ages to the Revolution resulting in the death of millions. Staple fare included grass, roots, white clay, and exhumed bodies. The potato famines of Ireland in 1822 and again in 1845 resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands.⁵

"The pages of India's history are black with the blotches of famine."⁶ From 1770 to 1900, 22 famines resulted in the death of 15 million. Likewise, China has been particularly susceptible to famine, with 45 million dying during four famines from 1810 to 1849. Russian peasants died by the thousands in famines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁷ During the 20th century, some 70 million people died from famines worldwide, including 30 million dying in China in the 1958 famine. Several famines afflicted the Soviet Union, including the Holodomor, a famine inflicted on Ukraine in 1932-33 by Stalin. Famine disaster struck both China and Bengal during World War II, while more recent famines include the Biafran famine in the 1960s, the disaster in Cambodia in the 1970s, the Ethiopian famine of 1984, and the North Korean famine of the 1990s.

Americans can hardly even contemplate the possibility that America could ever be subjected to such conditions. Yet, the Bible teaches that when people reject God and His Word, they set themselves up for disaster. In contrast to these shocking accounts of a lack of minimal sustenance to maintain human life, consider the far more catastrophic effect of a famine of **spiritual** sustenance: the Word of God. When any civilization lacks access and

attachment to God's thinking and God's directives, a truly severe famine will ensue. This dearth will, in turn, merit a corresponding physical famine. As God declared to the population of Amos' day:

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, **but of hearing the words of the LORD**. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

This description bears a striking similarity to the conditions now plaguing America. While Americans wallow in their plenty, a vast plague of spiritual starvation has swept across the land. Hear the words of God through Jeremiah warning another nation 2,700 years ago:

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, **if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice**, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.... "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, **I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you**. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good'" (Jeremiah 18:7-12).

And hear the words of God through Moses to another nation 3,500 years ago: "I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows upon them. They shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction" (Deuteronomy 32:23-24). We must ask this sobering question: Will America's spiritual famine facilitate national disaster?

ENDNOTES

¹ Ralph Graves (1917), "Fearful Famines of the Past," *National Geographic*, 32[1]:75, July, <https://apologeticspress.page.link/FearfulFaminesofthePast>.

² Ibid., p. 79.

³ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 83,86.

⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

⁷ Ibid., p. 89.



NOTE FROM

The Editor**Study Bible in Leather & Italian Duotone / 40th Year of *R&R***

When the AP *Defending the Faith Study Bible* was released last November, to our surprise our supply was quickly exhausted. We have recently received a new shipment to resupply our warehouse. We are excited to announce that, due to popular demand, we have added two additional covers in addition to the original hardback version. We have had numerous requests for Genuine Leather, and so in our ongoing efforts to please the public, we now have in stock a genuine leather version of the Study Bible. In addition, we thought many people would want something comparable to a soft, leather cover without having to pay the price that leather typically commands (although, at our non-profit prices, our leather Bible is priced considerably below the cost of other study Bibles!). As a nice alternative to Genuine Leather, we have also chosen to stock a soft cover version described by the manufacturer as “Italian Duotone.” This Bible cover is exquisite—soft to the touch, beautiful in appearance, and pleasant to handle. The Genuine Leather cover is black and the Italian Duotone is charcoal gray. Despite our best efforts, we anticipate that our supply will be prematurely depleted, so do not delay in securing your copy.

In the meantime, it's hard to believe that *Reason & Revelation*, our flagship monthly journal of Chris-

tian Evidences, has now entered its 40th year of continuous publication. *R&R* has remained a central teaching medium of Apologetics Press. In its pages appear articles on such topics as God's existence, the inspiration of the Bible, the creation/evolution controversy, the deity of Christ, ethics, the culture war, and so much more. The subject matter deals with relevant topics and current issues in a scholarly manner while seeking to remain understandable to the average person. Its appearance and layout are pleasing to the eye. **What's most important about this publication** is the critical content provided each month that serves to refute the forces of darkness that are enshrouding our culture with their unbelief and hostility toward God and His religion. This resource is of tremendous importance—not only to bolster and reinforce the thinking of the faithful—but to endeavor to reclaim those in your acquaintance who are being lured by the sinister propaganda that draws them away from God and His will. Please consider giving gift subscriptions to those who need help!

Dave Miller

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for More Details